

BEFORE THE

Federal Communications Commission

WASHINGTON, D. C. 20554

RECEIVED

MAY 28 1993

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY

In the Matter of)

)
Replacement of Part 90 by)
Part 88 to Revise the Private)
Land Mobile Radio Services and)
Modify the Policies Governing)
Them)

PR Docket 92-235

To: The Commission

**COMMENTS OF THE
FORESTRY-CONSERVATION COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION**

The Forestry-Conservation Communications Association (FCCA) hereby submits the following comments in response to the Commission's Notice of Proposed Rulemaking in PR Docket 92-235.

FCCA is the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) certified frequency coordinator for the Forestry Conservation Radio Service. FCCA represents its parent organizations, the National Association of State Foresters (NASF) and the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies (IAFWA), on matters related to radio communications before the FCC and other regulatory agencies. The members of NASF and IAFWA provide a full range of public safety related services, including fire protection, law enforcement, and emergency medical services over wide areas of state owned and/or protected lands.

No. of Copies rec'd
List A B C D E

019

The FCCA applauds the Commission's objective to create more usable radio channels for Part 90 radio users. Subpart B users are in dire need of new channels in many areas of the country. While some areas have implemented 800 MHz, other areas are unable to afford that technology, especially when a complete change out has to occur, and many agencies need the longer range capability of the 150-170 MHz spectrum. Therefore, your review is appropriate and timely. FCCA also notes that more spectrum is especially needed at this time along the entire east and west coast.

The FCCA requests that the Commission also review other spectrum uses in its refarming efforts. For instance, broadcast, TV and other large spectrum users should also be subject to review. The Commission should implement reduced bandwidth criteria in these other less efficient services to make more spectrum available for agencies that provide essential protection to life and property.

The FCCA is a member of the Land Mobile Communications Council and the Public Safety Communications Council, as such we support their comments. The remainder of this document covers specific areas of concern to the FCCA.

The FCCA stresses that the FCC must not implement any change that will disrupt the communications capability of any existing public safety communications system. The existing systems have been designed to meet the needs of the public safety provider, in this case the Forestry Conservation radio service users. The design of these systems was predicated on known engineering standards. If any of the engineering standards or

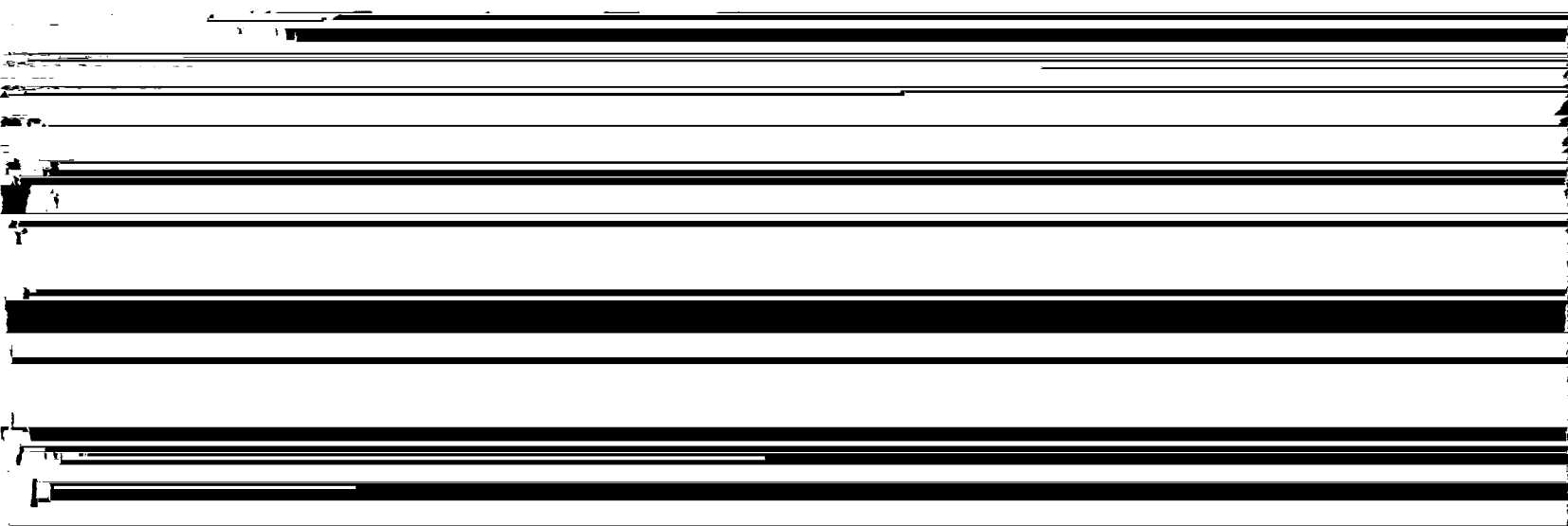
perimeters are adjusted, disruptions of communications could result, thereby placing many lives, valuable property, and the protection of the environment at stake. If public safety providers are unable to communicate effectively then their safety, as well as their effectiveness, is severely reduced.

The present frequency coordination process has developed over the past 50 years. A radio service was created for each governmental function requiring two way communication support. The system generally follows the Constitutional pattern in that state and then local government levels participated through such organizations as the National Association of State Foresters, the International Association of Fish and Wildlife Agencies, the American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials, the International Association of Fire Chiefs and their associated certified frequency coordinators. The system has been flexible, it has responded to the changing nature of spectrum management and public safety communication operations. Overall coordinations are effectively processed including interservice sharing. The FCCA supports the continued use of interservice sharing as a means of effectively increasing the utilization of all available spectrum by public safety agencies. This is a successful mechanism and should be retained without modifications. New radio services have been created, the latest being Emergency medical, as the need became evident. The system has and is meeting the needs of government public safety communications.

Advances in communication technology and the application of that technology in Public Safety operations has, and will continue to, cause changes in the use of two-way

radio communications. The concepts behind the refarming docket are a valid initiative by the FCC to ensure that spectrum management will continue to meet private and public needs. The FCCA strongly believes that any process to review public safety radio services and coordination should be done in a intergovernmental relations model separate from the private radio services. The FCC might consider having FCC staff work in an intergovernmental forum with state and local government, represented by existing organizations concerned with the various functions identified by the public safety radio services. Such a forum would best ensure that each governmental function, regardless of size, would have a real voice in preserving the environment unique to each public safety service. Such a method must insure less state and local tax dollars be expended compared to the process used in creating the public safety 800 MHz plan.

The FCC should implement rule changes that would coordinate systems rather than just the transmitter frequency. Most applicants are implementing a two way radio system as opposed to just a base station. Presently, the coordination organization is unable to protect the repeater input frequency. This causes the majority of post licensing



approach that did not close out any of these options at the present time. Although technical use of spectrum, radio services and coordination are related, each must be considered within its own sphere of operation. FCCA recommends that, as an alternative, any proposed changes to the present radio service/coordination system be deferred until after the channel split process has been determined and that any "refarmed frequencies" or newly created channels be retained in the services wherein they are created.

The use of the new frequencies should be frozen, or partially frozen, for a possible slow growth approach pending new technologies. Each radio service would submit a spectrum use plan based on its unique needs and communication environment, within a reasonable time frame of one year. The FCC would then have the needs of each radio service and would be able to revise the refarming proposals related to radio services and coordination and incorporate essential user needs, viewed from the actual channel split scheme, into any proposed revision of the present radio service/coordination system.

The FCCA noted that the proposed rules have removed the Transmitter Measurement section. The FCCA strongly supports the creation of new Transmitter Measurement in the new Part 88. The new equipment is going to be more complex and require increased stability of the transmitters and receivers be maintained for maximum performance and reduced probability of interference to other users.

The Commission should establish high technology standards in conjunction with the LMCC request to reevaluate the use of narrowband spectrum in 1999. The standard could be APCO 25 or other appropriate standard in existence or under development at that time, most meaningful and desirable to the public safety radio users.

The FCC proposal contains an exclusive use channel provision that could be very beneficial for many large or state wide radio system users. Exclusivity will provide such users with a high level of protection from other potential non-forestry users. Other agencies should not be licensed on wide area users frequencies in the area covered by that exclusive license. This approach will be an improvement over present rules and procedures for many statewide Forestry Conservation users.

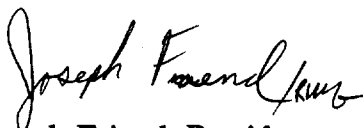
The FCCA requests that a separate section of the rules be created to cover the need of wide area systems. The new section should contain language regarding exclusivity, loading requirements, power limitations, and authorizations for mobile relay stations for such statewide agencies as State Police, Transportation and Forestry. These rules should include itinerant and temporary use operation, providing protection for an exclusive area (statewide) or other wide area as needed. Present rules do not provide adequate protection for itinerant or temporary operations, therefore, some states have had radio communication difficulty during emergency situations due to destructive interference on their radio frequencies.

The FCCA encourages the FCC to coordinate efforts with Canada and Mexico to establish the same or similar bandwidth reduction plans. This will result in greater use of the spectrum with fewer complications than presently experienced by border area spectrum users.

FCCA supports the Commission in its efforts to review use of the spectrum and for encouraging our input. The FCCA supports the use of advanced technologies to improve the use of the spectrum for all users at a reasonable cost to the users and with no disruption in present service.

Respectfully submitted,

FORESTRY CONSERVATION
COMMUNICATIONS ASSOCIATION

By 

Joseph Friend, President
Maryland Department of Natural Resources
Forestry and Wildlife
E1 Tawes Office Building
Annapolis, Maryland 21401

May 28, 1993